

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
1st meeting
held on
Tuesday, 18 September 1990
at 5.05 p.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Temporary Chairman: Mr. DE MARCO (President of the General Assembly)

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ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/45/SR.1
20 September 1990

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

90-55939 2579S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 5.05 p.m.

ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN

1. Mr. OUDOVENKO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) nominated Mr. Karukubiro-Kamunanwire (Uganda).
2. In the absence of further nominations and in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure, the TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN declared Mr. Karukubiro-Kamunanwire (Uganda) elected by acclamation.
3. Mr. Karukubiro-Kamunanwire (Uganda) was elected Chairman by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
2nd meeting
held on
Tuesday, 9 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE

(Uganda)

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ELECTION OF OFFICERS

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/45/SR.2
22 October 1990
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

90-56137 2713S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

1. The CHAIRMAN thanked the members of the Committee for his election, which was also a tribute to Uganda. He invited the Committee to elect its two Vice-Chairmen and its Rapporteur, in accordance with rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.
2. Mr. FLEMMING (Saint Lucia) nominated Mr. Posso Serrano (Ecuador) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
3. The CHAIRMAN suggested that the Committee should not proceed to a secret ballot at the current meeting.
4. Mr. Posso Serrano (Ecuador) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
5. The CHAIRMAN, noting that there had been only one nomination for the two offices of Vice-Chairman, suggested that the Committee should postpone the election of the other Vice-Chairman until the next meeting.
6. It was so decided.
7. Miss DAPUL (Philippines) nominated Mrs. von Heidenstam (Sweden) for the office of Rapporteur.
8. The CHAIRMAN suggested that, in the absence of other nominations, the Committee should not proceed to a secret ballot.
9. Mrs. von Heidenstam (Sweden) was elected Rapporteur by acclamation.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/45/1; A/SPC/45/L.1)

10. The CHAIRMAN drew attention to the recommendations concerning the organization and rationalization of the work contained in the report of the General Committee (A/45/250 and Add.1). In view of the current process of renewal and reform and the practice followed at previous sessions, the Assembly had decided that the forty-fifth session would recess on 18 December 1990 and close on 16 September 1991.
11. As had been stressed by the Assembly, punctuality was of the utmost importance. The Committee was scheduled to meet a maximum of seven times per week. According to information provided by the Secretariat, the Special Political Committee had, during the previous session, lost more than 14 hours or the equivalent of five meetings. Although that represented a significant improvement over the forty-third session, it was essential that all representatives should be punctual so that the Committee could begin its work on time. The Committee should note the decision adopted by the General Assembly to waive, during the current session, the application of rule 108 of the rules of procedure

(The Chairman)

regarding the quorum. It was understood that such a waiver did not in any way imply a permanent change in the relevant provisions of the rules of procedure and that, in accordance with those rules, the presence of a majority of members was required for any decision to be taken.

12. With respect to meetings, any extension of more than 30 minutes should be requested 24 hours before the meeting, and any additional meetings required would probably have to be held on Saturdays.

13. In accordance with the recommendation in annex V of the rules of procedure, he intended to close the list of speakers on each item when one third of the meetings allocated to the item had been held. Members wishing to make statements should place their names on the list kept by the Secretariat and would be called on to speak in that order. Once the list had been closed, any changes in the order could be made only by mutual consent between two delegations which had agreed to exchange places on the list. Otherwise, any representative not ready to speak when his turn came would be placed at the end of the list. In accordance with the practice established by the Committee and the recommendation approved by the General Assembly, representatives wishing to exercise the right of reply should inform the Secretariat, which would keep a list of replies to be heard by the Committee. If the same item was discussed at two meetings on the same day, delegations would exercise their right of reply at the end of the second meeting. The General Assembly had decided to limit to two the number of statements by any delegation in exercise of the right of reply, the first to be limited to 10 minutes and the second to 5 minutes. Explanations of a vote should be limited to 10 minutes in accordance with the decision of the General Assembly. When the same draft resolution was considered in a Main Committee and in plenary meeting, delegations should, as far as possible, explain their vote only once, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless their vote in plenary meeting was different from their vote in the Committee.

14. In order to facilitate the work of interpretation and the drafting of summary records, speakers should provide the conference officer with 15 copies of their prepared statements and 300 copies if they were also to be distributed to delegations, specialized agencies, observers and other parties concerned.

15. The General Assembly had drawn attention to regulation 4.9 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, which stipulated: "No Council, Commission or other competent body shall take a decision involving either a change in the programme budget approved by the General Assembly or the possible requirement of expenditure unless it has received and taken account of a report from the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the proposal." The Assembly had noted that it was imperative that Main Committees should allow sufficient time for the preparation of the estimate of expenditures by the Secretariat and for its consideration by ACABQ and the Fifth Committee. The General Assembly had imposed a deadline of 21 November for submission to the Fifth Committee of all draft resolutions having financial implications, and had decided that a minimum period of 48 hours should elapse before the submission of and the voting on any proposal involving expenditure, in order to allow the

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(The Chairman)

Secretary-General to prepare and present the related statement of administrative and financial implications. Delegations were urged to keep those decisions in mind.

16. With respect to the very expensive item of documentation, and in light of the decisions of the General Assembly, he appealed to the delegations to limit as much as possible their requests for additional documents and duplicate copies of material already distributed. Similarly, they should bear in mind that, owing to financial constraints, overnight processing of documents was not always possible.

17. As in the past, the Special Political Committee would have summary records. Moreover, the General Assembly had once again approved the recommendation of the General Committee that the Special Political Committee should be authorized to receive, on specific request, transcriptions of the debates of some of its meetings, or portions thereof. Those transcriptions, which were not part of the official records of the Committee, did not entail any extrabudgetary expense as they were prepared by verbatim reporters and typists from the tapes when the staff concerned were not otherwise occupied. Consequently, they appeared at a later stage than the summary records. The requirement that summary records should be distributed simultaneously in all the official languages had often led to delays in their distribution. Because of financial constraints, such delays were still liable to occur. It was therefore proposed to distribute summary records in the language in which they had originally been prepared, namely, English, French or Spanish, as soon as they were available. The other languages would follow immediately after they had been translated.

18. Delegations were asked to submit the names of their representatives so that a list of members of the Committee could be issued and to bear in mind the General Assembly's decision, taken at its thirty-eighth session, to prohibit smoking in small conference rooms, such as rooms 5 to 10 and A to E, and to discourage smoking in large conference rooms, such as rooms 1 to 4.

19. Referring to the organization of work, he drew attention to a letter dated 21 September 1990 from the President of the General Assembly addressed to the Chairman of the Committee (A/SPC/45/1) regarding the allocation of agenda items to the Special Political Committee. He also drew attention to document A/SPC/45/L.1, containing a provisional timetable for the work of the Committee. That timetable would have to be interpreted with the flexibility necessary to co-ordinate the Committee's work with that of the plenary Assembly and other bodies. In particular, the Special Political Committee would continue the close co-ordination with the Fourth Committee that had made it possible, during the previous three sessions, to avoid, as far as possible, holding concurrent meetings, on the understanding that such co-ordination would be carried out with flexibility to enable both committees to complete their work on schedule.

20. In the preparation of the programme of work, account has been taken of the documents available and the expected date of issuance of other basic documents. For the consideration of item 72 (Effects of atomic radiation) the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had been

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(The Chairman)

issued as document A/45/319. It should be noted that no basic documentation was expected for item 78 (Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations). Regarding item 76 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects), the report of the Special Committee on Peace-keeping Operations had already been issued as document A/45/330; two of the five reports of the Secretary-General in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 44/49 had been issued, namely, the report on requirements of peace-keeping operations (A/45/217) and the report on use of civilian personnel in peace-keeping operations (A/45/502). The report of the Secretary-General on a training manual for peace-keeping operations would be issued as document A/45/572. The other two reports of the Secretary-General relating to item 76, concerning standard operating procedures and a model agreement between the United Nations and host countries of peace-keeping forces, would be issued before the Committee began its examination of that item. Regarding item 74 (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East), the Commissioner-General's report would be issued shortly as document A/45/13. The report of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine had been issued as document A/45/382. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 44/47 D, E, F, G, H and J had been issued as documents A/45/463, A/45/464, A/45/465, A/45/466, A/45/429 and A/45/530, respectively. The remaining documents on that item - the reports of the Secretary-General in pursuance of resolution 44/47 I and K and the report of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA - would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of the item.

21. Regarding the consideration of item 77 (Questions relating to information), the report of the Committee on Information had been issued as document A/45/21. The report of the Director-General of UNESCO, as well as the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 44/50 (A/45/533), would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of that item. The report of the Joint Inspection Unit and the comments of the Secretary-General would also be available. With regard to item 71 (Science and peace), the report of the Secretary-General would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of that item. With reference to item 73 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space), the report of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space had been issued as document A/45/20. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations of the Second United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space would be issued prior to the Committee's consideration of that item. Concerning item 75 (Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories), the Special Committee's report prepared in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 44/48 would be issued as document A/45/576. The other reports of the Special Committee submitted in compliance with resolution 44/48 A had been issued as documents A/45/84 and A/45/306. The reports of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolutions A/44/48 A, B, C, D, E, F and G would be issued before the Committee began its consideration of that item.

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Adoption of the proposed timetable

22. The CHAIRMAN said that the timetable proposed in document A/SPC/45/L.1 took into account, among other factors, the availability of documentation, the consideration of related items in other bodies and the number of meetings devoted to the same questions in previous sessions.

23. Mr. IRUMBA (Uganda) emphasized the importance of receiving documentation as early as possible, in particular on item 77 (Questions relating to information).

24. Mr. KIRSCH (Canada), referring to item 76 (Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects), said that it was scheduled very early in the session. His delegation felt that it was important for delegations to have an opportunity to hold consultations before beginning the debate, in the light of current circumstances, and he understood that several delegations shared that opinion. Consequently, he suggested that the consideration of item 76 should be postponed to a later date in the session.

25. Mr. MADI (Egypt) and Mr. ZAWELS (Argentina) supported that suggestion.

26. The CHAIRMAN accordingly suggested that the decision on the timetable for the programme of work should be postponed to allow for consultations and the submission of a revised draft timetable.

Hearings on apartheid

27. The CHAIRMAN, referring to item 34 (Policies of apartheid of the Government of South Africa), which was to be considered directly in plenary meeting, said that the General Assembly had decided that organizations and individuals having a special interest in that question could make statements to the Special Political Committee. Two afternoon meetings on 26 and 27 November would be devoted to such hearings. Organizations or individuals wishing to be heard by the Committee should submit their requests in writing to the Chairman by Thursday, 15 November. Communications containing requests for hearings would be distributed as Committee documents and considered at a later meeting, before the hearings. The Secretariat would inform organizations and individuals approved by the Committee of the date of the meeting. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to that procedure.

28. It was so decided.

Working Group on Questions relating to Information

29. The CHAIRMAN said that, in order to expedite the work, he would propose that, as at previous sessions, the Committee should establish an open-ended working group, chaired by one of the Vice-Chairmen, to prepare the draft resolution on item 77 (Questions relating to information). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved that proposal.

30. It was so decided.

Working Group on International Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

31. The CHAIRMAN proposed that, as at previous sessions, the Committee should establish an open-ended working group, chaired by the delegation of Austria, to prepare the draft resolution on item 73 (International co-operation in the peaceful uses of outer space). If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee approved that proposal.

32. It was so decided.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 15 October, at 10 a.m., and suggested that the Committee should take up item 72 (Effects of atomic radiation). He invited those delegations wishing to speak on that item to place their names on the list of speakers, which would be closed at the end of the meeting on Monday, 15 October.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
3rd meeting
held on
Monday, 15 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Chairman:

Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE

(Uganda)

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ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

ORGANIZATION OF WORK

AGENDA ITEM 72: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

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Distr. GENERAL
A/SPC/45/SR.3
30 October 1990
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: SPANISH

90-56282 2787S (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIRMAN

1. The CHAIRMAN said that, in accordance with the provisions of rule 103 of the rules of procedure, an election would be held by secret ballot, unless the Committee decided otherwise in cases where there was only one candidate. The nomination of each candidate would be limited to one speaker, after which the Committee would immediately proceed to the election.
2. Mr. ADNAN (Malaysia) nominated Mr. Arcilla (Philippines) for the office of Vice-Chairman.
3. The CHAIRMAN said that, there being no other candidate, he took it that the Committee decided to waive the requirement for a secret ballot.
4. It was so decided.
5. Mr. Arcilla (Philippines) was elected Vice-Chairman by acclamation.
6. The CHAIRMAN reminded the Committee of the provisions of rule 110 of the rules of procedure, under which congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee were to be made only by the Chairman of the preceding session or by another member of his delegation after the members of the Bureau of the Committee had been elected.
7. Mr. BOUTS'KO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) observed that the item "Effects of atomic radiation" would be taken up at the current meeting. His delegation hoped that the Committee would consider that item and all the other items before it in a spirit of unity.
8. His delegation felt that the Chairman's role was not only to run the meetings according to schedule, but also to ensure that the meetings were fruitful.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (A/SPC/45/1; A/SPC/45/L.1/Rev.1)

9. The CHAIRMAN recalled that, at its 2nd meeting, the Committee had decided to take a decision on the first item of its programme of work only, and to defer a decision on the remainder of the items to allow for further consultations.
10. In the revised timetable in document A/SPC/45/L.1/Rev.1, it was proposed that the Committee should commence its consideration of item 76, "Comprehensive review of the whole question of peace-keeping operations in all their aspects", on 20 November in the afternoon and continue its debate on 21, 23 and 28 November in the afternoon. It was further proposed that item 78, "Question of the composition of the relevant organs of the United Nations", should be taken up at the beginning of the meeting on 29 October before the Committee began its consideration of item 74, "United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East".

(The Chairman)

11. If there were no objections, he would take it that the Committee approved the revised programme of work set forth in document A/SPC/45/L.1/Rev.1.

12. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 72: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/45/319; A/SPC/45/L.2)

13. Ms. ZIKMUNDOVA (Belgium) said that, since its establishment in 1955, the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had produced numerous reports and studies which had made considerable contributions to a scientific understanding of the effects of atomic radiation on the human body and the environment.

14. The Scientific Committee's research was particularly valuable to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), whose future activities would be aimed at achieving a better understanding of the levels, effects and dangers of atomic radiation from all sources.

15. On behalf of the sponsors, her delegation was introducing the draft resolution in document A/SPC/45/L.2, and hoped that the members of the Committee would adopt it by consensus.

16. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that the Community was very pleased with the results achieved by the Scientific Committee and the fruitful co-operation carried out with other international bodies such as UNEP, FAO, WHO, IAEA, the International Commission on Radiological Protection and the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements.

17. The most recent report of the Scientific Committee (A/45/319) emphasized its constant efforts to base its work on all available information about sources of radiation, exposures and their effects. The distribution of a questionnaire on medical radiation usage to the Ministers of Health of all States Members of the United Nations would aid those efforts.

18. The report stated that, from the Committee's review of the various sources of radiation, natural sources appeared to be the main contributors to the collective dose. Although mankind could do little to control natural radiation, that conclusion should not diminish international efforts to prevent the negative effects of man-made sources of radiation. The European Community was involved in those efforts because of its specific responsibilities in the field of health protection under the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) Treaty. The European Community and all its member States had recognized the need for international co-operation in that respect. All of the member States of the European Community had signed the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, and the Community had decided to accede to it. The Community and its member States also recognized the need to consider further ways of enhancing international co-operation in the area of nuclear safety.

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(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

19. The European Community applauded the commitment of the Scientific Committee to continue its research on the radiobiological effects of the Chernobyl accident, and hoped that a resolution would be adopted to renew the mandate of the Committee.

20. Mr. SATOH (Japan) said that the world was becoming increasingly dependent on nuclear power and related technologies, and that it was therefore imperative to guard against the potentially harmful or even deadly effects of atomic radiation. Just as the threat was global, so must the response be global. It was crucial for scientists throughout the world to co-operate in researching the effects of atomic radiation. The Scientific Committee was the ideal forum for such international co-operation.

21. His delegation considered that in dealing with the issue of atomic radiation the Scientific Committee would have to tackle a myriad of political, economic and social issues, and that if efforts to protect mankind and the environment were to be effective, they must be based on purely scientific and technical information.

22. As a member country of the Scientific Committee, Japan had, from the time of its establishment, attached great importance to its work and would continue to offer support and co-operation.

23. His delegation urged Member States, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the specialized agencies and the various non-governmental organizations concerned, to co-operate vigorously with the Committee and provide it with all the information needed to ensure that its activities were as effective as possible.

24. Lastly, he expressed the hope that the Special Political Committee would adopt the draft resolution before it by consensus.

25. Mr. BOUTS'KO (Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that his delegation had studied with considerable interest the report of the Scientific Committee, which contained information on the important work it had performed. Its co-operation with international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was undoubtedly productive.

26. The material published by the Scientific Committee made it easier to understand the extraordinary dangers of atomic radiation and to decide what kind of protection was needed against it.

27. Such protection should involve, in the first place, the total elimination of nuclear weapons; and, secondly, the creation of conditions for regulating nuclear activities for peaceful purposes so that they would not endanger human lives.

28. The Scientific Committee in its report attached great importance to the medical and biological effects of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant disaster. His delegation commended the member States of the Committee on their efforts to limit and overcome those effects.

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(Mr. Bouts'ko, Ukrainian SSR)

29. The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant had caused immense damage in the Ukrainian SSR and its effects had been felt in all spheres of the country's life. More than 1,800,000 persons, including 380,000 children, had suffered the direct effects of radiation.

30. Everything possible must be done to prevent such accidents. The Ukrainian SSR had made strenuous efforts to that end. However, comparing the adverse effects of the disaster with what had been achieved, it was clear that the action taken so far was only the beginning of a long struggle to overcome the consequences.

31. In the early stages of the disaster, it had been a matter of saving people exposed to direct radiation, but now there was the enormous task of planning protection for the whole population.

32. The strategy for the period until the year 2000 included a comprehensive programme for the eradication of the effects of the disaster, which had been approved by the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR. The programme consisted of emergency measures for the period 1990-1992, using all the technical, scientific and economic resources of the Ukraine as well as all the resources of the Soviet Union.

33. The main objective was to create conditions for safeguarding the population living in the vicinity of nuclear power plants. Those areas covered 50,000 square kilometres, an area greater than the territory of 12 European countries. The Chernobyl disaster had thus given rise to a multitude of complex questions, for most of which there had as yet been no answer.

34. The Government of the Ukrainian SSR had not accepted the idea proposed by certain experts of 350 mSv in a life of 70 years. The idea of safety for the population in a contaminated zone must take account of sociological and psychological as well as medical and biological aspects.

35. Moreover, some of the population would have to be relocated; according to estimates by the Ukrainian Ministry of Health and the Academy of Sciences, 30,000 people in 67 population centres would have to be moved.

36. The programme provided for a radical improvement in medical care, with the establishment of clinics, monitoring of health, provision of all aspects of preventive care and the diagnosis and treatment of illnesses.

37. Measures had been taken to strengthen the health institutes. A broad network of diagnostic centres, laboratories and specialist clinics was being set up. The country's technical and scientific institutes were participating in that task.

38. It was important for the work of eradicating the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster to have a scientific basis. From the first few days following the disaster, scientists had been enlisted from all over the Republic. A set of information and diagnostic measures had been adopted for monitoring the atomic fuel in the destroyed reactor. Initially, not enough attention had been paid to certain

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(Mr. Bouts'ko, Ukrainian SSR)

basic problems, and hence there was a lack of data for studying abnormal biological phenomena, especially in the areas in the vicinity of Chernobyl. Studies were currently being made of economic activity in the zones affected by radiation.

39. It was necessary to join forces, because the Chernobyl disaster was an international one. He thanked the many countries and governmental and non-governmental organizations which had co-operated with up-to-date measures in the relevant investigations. In April 1990 the Council of Ministers of the Ukrainian SSR had appealed to the international community for greater co-operation in overcoming the effects of the disaster. Since then, many offers of help had been received.

40. The Economic and Social Council at its second regular session in 1990, had adopted resolution 1990/50, on international co-operation to address and mitigate the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant; the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic placed great hopes on the implementation of that resolution.

41. In September 1990 an international conference on the radiological and biological aspects of the Chernobyl disaster had been held near Kiev with some 300 scientists from 22 countries participating. One of the results of the conference had been the recognition of the need to unite the efforts of scientists at world level. The Ukrainian SSR was pursuing and would continue to pursue an open-door policy, with no secrecy, and wished to co-operate with all specialists in the field.

42. He thanked all those who had co-operated with the Ukrainian SSR in dealing with the problems caused by the Chernobyl disaster, in particular, those who had helped in the rehabilitation of the children affected by the accident.

43. In appealing for assistance from the international community, the Ukrainian SSR was not proposing to solve its problems at the cost of the community, but to join in the general effort. The Government and the scientific and social organizations of the Ukrainian SSR wished to make a serious contribution to developing co-operation. It would like to see greater participation by UNEP, WHO, IAEA and other organizations in the proposed studies on the effects of the Chernobyl disaster. The Ukrainian SSR was one of the parties to an agreement on the establishment in Kiev of an international technical and scientific centre on Chernobyl and intended to assist work to that end by all possible means.

44. The CHAIRMAN said that Luxembourg had joined the sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2.

45. Mr. BURAVKIN (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) said that never before in the 35 years since its establishment had the importance of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation been so widely recognized. The Committee was unique as a centre for the collection, study and dissemination of information on the hazards of atomic radiation for humanity and the environment. Its data had both scientific and political significance on a global scale. The

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(Mr. Buravkin, Byelorussian SSR)

Byelorussian SSR shared the world-wide concern about the dangers of natural or man-made sources of radiation. The number of zones affected by artificial radiation sources had been increasing for some time. Since Hiroshima, the human environment had been experiencing a steady degradation due to artificially caused radiation. Both potential and existing radiation crises had to be prevented.

46. The Scientific Committee was in a position to make an important contribution to the preparations for the 1991 international conference on nuclear safety and the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. Both sets of preparatory work could be considered by the Scientific Committee at its fortieth session. The Committee had the necessary experience to make a major contribution to the elaboration of principles aimed at preventing the degradation of the human environment due to radiation.

47. The environmental hazards of radiation were already a fact of life in the Byelorussian SSR because of the Chernobyl disaster, which had affected 33 per cent of the Republic's territory, 20 per cent of its population and 18 per cent of its most fertile soil. The Byelorussian SSR was therefore the State which had been the most severely affected by radiation in the history of mankind. Apart from the original affected areas, new areas of radioactive contamination had already been detected, creating a crisis situation. Thus, in accordance with the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, his Government called upon the General Assembly to declare the territory of the Republic a disaster area.

48. Chernobyl had created a number of complex problems to which there were as yet no solutions. His delegation appreciated the scientific and technical contribution of the Scientific Committee, which had made the international community aware of the full scope of the harmful consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, for a truly global effort was needed to resolve those hitherto unknown problems.

49. Because of the previous policy of secrecy, the centralized monopoly on all issues having to do with atomic energy, and its limited national sovereignty, the Byelorussian SSR had been hindered in its efforts to provide the Scientific Committee with information, previously classified as confidential on the Chernobyl accident. That information had since been declassified and was no longer confidential.

50. In general, the Scientific Committee had played a major role. The importance of its contributions could be seen in the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council at its second regular session of 1990 (E/1990/97), which was a useful document. His delegation wished in particular to highlight the Committee's participation in the work of the Inter-Agency Committee for the Response to Nuclear Accidents, its co-operation with UNEP and IAEA, and its participation in an international expert study of the radiation effects of the Chernobyl disaster on the most highly contaminated territories, undertaken at the request of the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The Byelorussian SSR suggested that consideration be given to increasing the maximum membership of the Scientific Committee.

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(Mr. Buravkin, Byelorussian SSR)

51. The official estimates regarding the health of individuals affected by the Chernobyl disaster had not turned out to be accurate. Consequently, his Government had abandoned the concepts of 700 mSv and 300 mSv and had had to draw up its own long-term programme, with due regard for world opinion, including the less optimistic forecasts.

52. The collection and study of data on levels of radiation and radioactivity recorded in the environment and their effects on human beings was being carried out at the national radiation control system and in some 40 scientific, health-care and agricultural research centres.

53. The Government of the Byelorussian SSR had been given special powers to speed up the resettlement of people living in zones with a high level of radioactive contamination and urgently needed a national radiation service to monitor contamination levels in food. In spite of the many efforts being carried out in the Byelorussian SSR, without international co-operation or safeguards, positive results could not be expected. His Government shared the Scientific Committee's concern that, more than four and a half years after the Chernobyl disaster, all the efforts needed to resolve the problems had not yet been made. For that reason, the Byelorussian SSR was looking forward to participating in the work of the Chernobyl Scientific Centre and of an international medical radiation centre in the USSR, in co-operation with IAEA and WHO. His Government was also proposing the establishment in the Byelorussian SSR, and with the participation of UNEP, UNESCO and other international organizations, of an international centre for research on the environmental, radioactive and biological effects of nuclear energy.

54. Mr. ZAWELS (Argentina) said that the report of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (A/45/319) demonstrated the extensive work of the Committee, the wide range of themes that it had chosen for consideration, and a more in-depth analysis of the effects of radiation exposure. His country wished to stress the co-operation requested by the Scientific Committee from the Health Ministries of the Member States. Also worthy of attention was the Scientific Committee's conclusion that natural sources of radiation had been the main contributor to the collective dose.

55. He wished to emphasize the importance of the relationship between the effects of atomic radiation and the study of the environment and, in particular, the magnitude of the effects of atomic radiation on human beings. Argentina agreed that the Committee should do further and more extensive study on that relationship. It also shared the Committee's hope that the States Members, the specialized agencies and IAEA would continue to assist in its work.

56. In recent months, the international community had witnessed and had created important changes in the relations between nations. However, the Gulf crisis had been one recent negative event in that sphere. The crisis had demonstrated that the lessons of the not-so-distant past, namely, the oil crises of 1973 and 1979, had not been fully appreciated. Once again, the world was critically dependent on fossil fuels, showing how important it was to continue actively the search for

(Mr. Zawels, Argentina)

alternative sources of energy. Among them, one of the most outstanding was nuclear fission energy.

57. Within that framework, Argentina was beginning to use atomic energy for peaceful purposes. The goal of his country's nuclear programme was the social and economic development of society and its peaceful purposes were clear. The recent regional agreements, in particular, the co-operation agreement with Brazil in that area, were unmistakable indications of the peaceful objectives of Argentina's nuclear programme.

58. Argentina had therefore a special interest in the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, in which it had participated since the establishment of the Committee. Argentina's National Atomic Energy Commission provided important information to the Scientific Committee for use in its reports and those data represented a useful source of information.

59. Argentina wished to join the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2, which it hoped would be adopted by consensus.

60. Mr. JANOWSKI (Poland) said that the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, which 35 years ago had been given a mandate to study the risks and effects of ionizing radiation, had fulfilled its responsibilities in a remarkable way. Those achievements had been realized under financial and organizational conditions which were not very favourable to efficient work.

61. Referring to a theory held by some scientists to the effect that small doses of atomic radiation had a beneficial effect on human beings, comparable to the homeopathic effect of certain harmful substances taken in small doses, he did not think that the Scientific Committee should devote much time to the question of such potentially beneficial effects. More emphasis should be placed on the effects of a nuclear catastrophe caused by the breakdown of a reactor and, in general, on the harmful effects of atomic radiation as opposed to any potentially beneficial effects.

62. In the conclusions of the Scientific Committee, it was suggested, if not stated in so many words, that radiation had no direct genetic impact on human beings, an idea that would be contrary to all thinking on the subject to date and might change the general public's perception of nuclear power.

63. The Scientific Committee had been praised for its co-operation with bodies like IAEA, WHO and UNEP, but consideration should be given, in particular, to increased co-operation with IAEA.

64. In conclusion, he pledged the Polish delegation's support for the Scientific Committee's work in the years ahead.

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65. Mr. LIU Zhaodong (China) said that the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had done useful work over the years. It had reached authoritative conclusions on the effects of atomic radiation which could serve as the basis for the correct use of atomic radiation and the protection of mankind against its harmful effects. The Scientific Committee had also promoted co-operation between countries and helped to set up development of identical standards.

66. China had adopted a policy of peaceful utilization of nuclear energy as part of its national economic development and therefore attached great importance to the work of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in the protection of human health against the harmful effects of atomic radiation.

67. At the thirty-fifth session of the Scientific Committee, the Chinese delegation had promised to provide information for the updating of the Committee's scientific report. He also reiterated a proposal made at the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly to the effect that the Scientific Committee should disseminate information promptly, especially among developing countries.

68. In conclusion, the Chinese delegation supported the draft resolution (A/SPC/45/L.2).

69. Mr. SMIRNOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said that the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation had enough experience and knowledge to contribute to the prevention of possible sources of radioactive contamination and the elimination of existing sources. He referred in that connection to the useful work accomplished in connection with the accident that had occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power station.

70. At its second regular session in 1990, the Economic and Social Council, in resolution 1990/50, had requested the Secretary-General to provide appropriate support for the international assessment of the consequences of the Chernobyl accident. That assessment had been organized by IAEA with the participation of various other bodies, including the Scientific Committee.

71. The fact had to be faced that the situation regarding Chernobyl, to which the representatives of the Byelorussian SSR and the Ukrainian SSR had referred, continued to be extremely serious. Both the Government of the Soviet Union and the social organizations concerned attached great importance to the implementation of a programme to eliminate the consequences of the accident, but they had been so great that it would be most unrealistic for the Soviet Union to expect to be able to tackle them with its own resources, which was why the Soviet Union was highly appreciative of the assistance given by international organizations, States and individuals.

72. The Chernobyl accident had thrown into relief the dangers of atomic radiation and had served to reassert the need for nuclear disarmament. The data collected by the Scientific Committee for its reports helped to ensure wide recognition of the dangers of radioactive contamination and the need to prevent it, first and foremost by discontinuing nuclear-weapon tests.

(Mr. Smirnov, USSR)

73. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR had recently ratified the Treaty on the Limitation of Underground Nuclear Weapon Tests and the Treaty on Underground Nuclear Explosions for Peaceful Purposes, and had addressed an appeal to the parliaments of the world stressing the urgent need to put an end as soon as possible to all nuclear-weapons tests as an important factor conducive to the consolidation of the system of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and their elimination.

74. With regard to the discontinuance of nuclear-weapon tests, the Soviet Union had taken initiatives that were well known; however, the problem was one that called for joint efforts by the international community as a whole.

75. The Soviet delegation believed that the time had come for all bodies in the United Nations system, with a view to the peaceful use of advances in science and technology for the benefit of all States, to take part in the preparation of a universal treaty on the discontinuance and prohibition of nuclear tests, and he was sure that the Scientific Committee would make its contribution to that work.

76. In conclusion, he expressed the hope that draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2 on the effects of atomic radiation and the work of the Scientific Committee would be adopted by consensus.

77. Mr. POSSO SERRANO (Ecuador) stressed the importance of the Scientific Committee's work for a more comprehensive understanding of acceptable levels and effects of atomic radiation. Naturally, there must be close co-operation between the Scientific Committee and UNEP, so as to meet the needs of mankind with regard to protecting the environment, preventing accidents like the one to which reference had been made and putting an end to irresponsible nuclear-weapons tests.

78. Bearing in mind the persistent or periodic world energy crises, as the representative of Argentina had pointed out, nuclear energy had become extremely important. Ecuador naturally advocated the use of nuclear energy solely for peaceful purposes.

79. Ecuador wished to see the Scientific Committee continuing with its work as a guarantee of the safety of mankind, through its periodic reports on doses, effects and risks of atomic radiation; for that reason, the Ecuadorian delegation supported draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2.

80. The delegation of Ecuador reserved the right to return to the topic if the question arose of increasing the membership of the Scientific Committee. Although it considered that the Scientific Committee had worked efficiently with its present membership, an increase might more fully reflect the universal interest in the problems of atomic radiation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

81. The CHAIRMAN announced that at the next meeting the general debate on item 72 would be concluded and a decision reached on draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2.

The meeting rose at 11.55 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS

General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
4th meeting
held on
Tuesday, 16 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 4th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda)

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AGENDA ITEM 72: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 72: EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION (A/45/319)

1. Mr. SMERAL (Czechoslovakia) said that after long years Czechoslovakia was participating in the current session of the General Assembly as a member of the family of democratic States, having completely rid itself of all vestiges of the old ideological clichés. His delegation was taking a fresh look at a number of international issues, an approach which was also reflected in its work at the current session of the General Assembly. At the same time, it was aware that there were questions, especially of a scientific nature, where Czechoslovak specialists had achieved successes, even under the conditions of the former totalitarian régime, which could provide a basis for current activities. That was particularly true of Czechoslovakia's membership of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.

2. Czechoslovakia had been a member of the Scientific Committee since its establishment in 1955, and Czechoslovak scientists had assumed their responsibilities in that sphere in full awareness of the fundamental importance of the issue for the whole planet. Czechoslovakia had a high opinion of the role of the Special Committee in promoting human health and protecting the environment, in particular by drawing the attention of Member States to the imperative need to end nuclear-weapon tests in the atmosphere. The Scientific Committee's endeavours had led to the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, signed at Moscow in 1963.

3. In recent years, the Scientific Committee's activities had focused on a range of questions relating to the use of radiation in medicine, nuclear-energy programmes and seepages of radon and related products, and attention had also been devoted to new discoveries in the field of prenatal defects (especially of the brain) in the radiation-affected populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The detailed scientific evaluation of the consequences of the radiation emitted in the Chernobyl nuclear accident was also significant.

4. Over the previous year his Government had contributed to the activities of the Scientific Committee by making available processed data on the exposure of citizens and medical personnel in diagnostic and therapeutic uses of ionization in Czechoslovakia. It would provide data during the current year on radio-nuclides released into the atmosphere by Czechoslovak nuclear reactors. As a demonstration of Czechoslovakia's full support for the Scientific Committee's activities, it was a sponsor of draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2, and firmly believed that the draft would be adopted by consensus.

5. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu), speaking as Chairman of the South Pacific Forum regional organization on behalf of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands, as well as Vanuatu, said that to outsiders the South Pacific might appear an unspoiled maritime setting far removed from global problems. Yet such a view ignored the enormous environmental threats posed in the

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(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

region by global warming and climate changes, as well as the potential impact of atomic radiation caused by nuclear testing over the previous three decades.

6. The atmospheric nuclear tests carried out until 1974 had resulted in a significant increase in artificial radiation levels, particularly of strontium-90 and caesium-137, with menacing effects on human health. While those levels had declined with the termination of atmospheric testing, it was known from the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that there would be a need for continued monitoring of the longer-term effects of such radiation.

7. The concerns of the member countries of the South Pacific Forum were being exacerbated by France's continuation of its underground nuclear-testing programme in the Tuamotu Archipelago, to the east of the Cook Islands, in total disregard of calls by the countries of the region for an end to testing.

8. France continued to maintain that its nuclear-testing programme was safe. Given the fragile environment of the atolls on which tests were carried out, it was impossible to accept such assurances. How could anyone claim, let alone guarantee, that there was no contamination, when the underground cavities at Mururoa contained the poisonous radioactive debris of over 100 nuclear explosions? What assurances were there that the debris would remain for ever sealed within the atoll, without contaminating the outside environment over the long life of the radioactive materials, equivalent to 100 bombs of the type dropped at Hiroshima? The destructive power of cumulative nuclear explosions on the physical structure of Mururoa atoll should not be underestimated. The fact that in 1989 and 1990 France had decided to carry out tests at Fangataufa was evidence that the French Government itself recognized that Mururoa's capacity to contain such explosions had diminished. Moreover, there was no specific evidence by any scientific mission proving the safety of nuclear tests, as France had recently claimed once again before the General Assembly. The United Nations nuclear-weapon study, soon to be issued, made the point that there could be no guarantee against the environmental impact of the accidental or the long-term release of atomic radiation.

9. The steadfast opposition of the Governments and peoples of the South Pacific to nuclear testing was not based only on environmental concerns and their livelihood, but on the strongly held view that there was simply no place for nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region or in any other part of the world. It was also consistent with the call they had made for the urgent conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, the importance they attached to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and their opposition to proposals to dump nuclear waste in the region. All those concerns had been voiced by South Pacific States in all appropriate international forums and were reflected in various regional arrangements.

10. In short, the continuance of France's nuclear-weapon programme in the region was an insult to the wishes of the region's inhabitants and denigrated the validity and integrity of regionalism among the Pacific island Governments. Half measures or declarations like those made by France during the past year that the number of

(Mr. Van Lierop, Vanuatu)

nuclear tests would be reduced from eight to six on economic grounds were not enough. The member States of the South Pacific Forum simply demanded that France should cease nuclear testing in their region.

11. Mrs. SINHA (India) said that the prime objective of India's atomic energy programme was the development, control and use of atomic energy solely for peaceful purposes, namely, the generation of electricity and the development of nuclear applications in research, agriculture, industry, medicine and other fields. India had always been dedicated to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and it regarded science and technology as a means to accelerate economic development.

12. The tragic accident at Chernobyl in 1986 was a reminder of the terrible consequences that ionizing radiation could have for man and his environment. India was aware of the need to maintain the highest nuclear safety standards, and had closely co-operated with the Scientific Committee by participating actively in the Committee's annual sessions and in other international meetings and conferences on that issue.

13. Her delegation hoped that the Member States, the specialized agencies and the organizations of the United Nations system, as well as other national and international scientific bodies, would continue to make pertinent information available to the Scientific Committee for its studies and research. She appreciated the Scientific Committee's excellent annual report, which was a reflection of its important and fruitful work. Her delegation was confident that the Scientific Committee would continue to fulfil its functions successfully, and reiterated that India would continue to co-operate with its efforts.

14. Mr. BUGTI (Pakistan) expressed his delegation's appreciation of the Scientific Committee's work over the previous 35 years. In co-ordination with other United Nations organizations, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), that Committee had made a valuable contribution to scientific understanding of ionizing radiation, radioactivity and its effects on human health and the environment.

15. In an era of increasing usage of radiation for medical purposes, his delegation commended the Scientific Committee's distribution of a questionnaire on medical radiation usage as a timely step in highlighting the safety aspects of such usage.

16. However, his delegation felt that the only means of preserving the global environment from the risks of future contamination was to support a moratorium on all types of nuclear explosions, without exception. Pakistan was prepared to subscribe to a comprehensive test-ban treaty on a global, regional or bilateral level, in order to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Countries that applied discriminatory, inequitable and selective restrictions should carefully reflect on the possible consequences of their actions, which could prove counter-productive.

(Mr. Bugti, Pakistan)

17. He strongly emphasized the need to protect nuclear installations from armed attack. Pakistan and India had taken the lead in that regard by signing an agreement in Islamabad on 31 December 1988. That agreement constituted a significant confidence-building measure that would have a stabilizing effect on the situation in South Asia.

18. There was an urgent need to devise a rational and equitable system of co-operation to forestall the grave danger of damage to nuclear facilities. Industrialized countries must assist developing countries in maintaining reactors exported by the former, and must refrain from prohibiting the supply of vital spare parts. His delegation also opposed undue restrictions on the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, which was indispensable for developing countries faced with an acute shortage of conventional fuels and other energy sources. In Pakistan, for example, there was a projected shortage within the next 10 years of 8,000 megawatts of power, and nuclear energy was the only solution.

19. He regretted that certain countries, on the pretext of preventing nuclear proliferation, had withheld safety information from nuclear plants on a discriminatory basis, without regard to the potentially disastrous consequences of nuclear accidents in densely populated areas. The ramifications of an accident would be felt not only in the surrounding area but in distant regions and countries as well. However, he noted that the situation had somewhat improved, and that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had made a creditable effort to ensure the continued flow of safety-related information.

20. Considering the importance of the Scientific Committee's work, his delegation urged that suitable resources should be provided to that Committee so that it could continue its important and useful task and its valuable contribution to the understanding of the effects of radiation.

21. Ms. BIRD (Australia) said that Australia had been a member of the Scientific Committee since its establishment in 1955, and that it had also had the honour of chairing the Committee for the previous two years. It was pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2. The Scientific Committee was a small, technical body which, for 35 years, had efficiently studied and disseminated data on levels of ionizing radiation and radioactivity in the environment, as well as on the risks of various types of harm caused by radiation, both short-term and long-term, to individuals and future generations.

22. One of the Scientific Committee's most difficult tasks was the continuing evaluation of the radiobiological effects of ionizing radiation at low doses. The major reports produced by the Committee at three- to five-year intervals fulfilled a very important function by reporting on radiation sources and effects, and contained a vast amount of reliable scientific detail for the use of specialists. Since they were not easy reading, it would be useful to provide the Secretariat with resources for the preparation of a United Nations publication containing a simplified account for less specialized readers, as in 1982.

(Ms. Bird, Australia)

23. The Scientific Committee's work had always been characterized by international co-operation of the highest order with specialized agencies like IAEA, the World Health Organization and UNEP.

24. Because the future work to be undertaken by the Scientific Committee was demanding, it would be useful to regularize the position of the Acting Secretary of the Committee, and to fill the vacant support position that had been authorized several years earlier.

25. The Australian Government was firmly committed to the objective of complete nuclear disarmament under effective international control, and had called on all States to negotiate urgently a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would for ever prohibit nuclear testing by all States in all environments. Such a treaty would ensure that nuclear arsenals were not further increased, would prevent the development of new weapons systems and the modernization of existing systems, and would strengthen efforts to prevent the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

26. In December 1986 the Treaty of Rarotonga had come into effect. It established a large area of the South Pacific as a nuclear-free zone, thereby addressing the concerns of South Pacific countries about nuclear risks. The Treaty had three Protocols which the five nuclear-weapon States had been invited to sign. Australia had welcomed the ratification of the Protocols by the Soviet Union and China; however, it regretted that the United States, the United Kingdom and France had not yet signed or ratified them.

27. Under the third Protocol, the signatories agreed not to test any explosive device within the nuclear-free zone. Countries in the region were, understandably, very concerned about France's continued nuclear testing in that area. In 1990, France had conducted tests on both Mururoa and Fangataufa. Australia was opposed in principle to nuclear testing, and did not accept the claim that the nuclear tests on Mururoa and Fangataufa, or anywhere else in the region, were without long-term danger to the region due to structural damage to the atoll.

28. Australia and the countries of the South Pacific had called on France many times to cease its nuclear-testing programme in the South Pacific, not only because its aim was to develop nuclear weapons - and in that sense her delegation called on nuclear-weapon States to cease their testing - but also because that testing was situated far from mainland France. As Australia had said many times before, if France insisted that it needed such a programme, it should conduct it in metropolitan France.

29. Mr. KOTÉY (Ghana) drew attention to the Scientific Committee's report (A/45/319), which stated that the Scientific Committee had concluded, among other things, that natural sources of radiation were the main contributor to the collective dose, and expressed concern about the number of unproven claims relative to the radiobiological effects of the Chernobyl accident.

(Mr. Kotey, Ghana)

30. While Ghana fully supported the development of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, it was at the same time conscious of the responsibility for safety that should go with nuclear science. In that regard, he commended the Scientific Committee's efforts to educate the countries of the world on some of the deleterious effects of atomic radiation.

31. In many developing countries, particularly where forests were threatened by the use of firewood as an energy source, nuclear power was being heralded as a reliable, inexhaustible and cost-effective energy source. Unfortunately, no one could deny that nuclear power was subject to serious problems of technological and human error. Accordingly, his delegation urged all Governments interested in developing nuclear or atomic programmes to ensure that they initially prepared themselves to contain accidents. In that connection, he commended the fruitful work of IAEA, which continued to exert an immense moral influence on the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

32. Furthermore, his delegation condemned all nuclear tests, whether in the atmosphere, under water or underground, and urged the international community to continue supporting the Scientific Committee, one of the useful instruments for the knowledge and expertise most necessary for individual and collective survival.

33. The CHAIRMAN said that the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, who had not been present when the list of speakers had been closed, wished to speak on the item. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to give him the floor.

34. It was so decided.

35. Mr. KHANI (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation had carefully studied the Scientific Committee's report, particularly paragraph 5, in which the Committee expressed the hope that States Members of the United Nations, the specialized agencies and IAEA would continue to assist in its work, especially by providing relevant information on the subjects of interest for the future programme of study, so that its deliberations could be based on the broadest and most up-to-date scientific and technical information. In that respect, his delegation notes with satisfaction the co-operation between IAEA and the Scientific Committee.

36. It was important to eliminate all restrictions on the transfer of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, which was necessary in order for the developing countries to benefit from the medical and professional applications of such technology. His delegation hoped that draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2 would be adopted by consensus.

37. Mrs. GAZEAU-SECRET (France), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of Vanuatu - speaking in a lamentably virulent tone on behalf of the States members of the South Pacific Forum - and the representative of Australia had questioned the nuclear testing carried out by France in the South Pacific. She was very surprised at those statements, in view of the transparency

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(Mrs. Gazeau-Secret, France)

and openness shown by the Government of France towards the States of the South Pacific, whose concerns her Government understood. France had hoped that, in return, those States would try to understand the requirements of its nuclear policy.

38. Her delegation would not reply to each one of the criticisms that had been expressed because they dealt with matters which were before other Committees; she would merely point out that the underground nuclear tests conducted by France did not jeopardize the interests of the States of the region, nor did they affect the health of the populations living there or their environment. That had been verified in situ by several international scientific missions, as noted in various publications issued by the Government of France and by several research institutes.

39. When General Assembly resolution 44/119 F had been adopted, the delegation of France had explained to the international community the reasons why it could not become a party to the Protocol to the Treaty of Rarotonga.

40. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that students of litigation practised presenting arguments in favour and against the same cause. Nevertheless, there were certain causes that could not be defended, for overriding moral reasons. One of them was slavery; another was genocide. For the countries of the South Pacific, the nuclear tests carried out in that region belonged to that category.

41. At present, the idea of reconciliation prevailed everywhere. Practically every analyst in the world now recognized that there would not be a nuclear war between East and West in the near future. Consequently, it made no sense to continue conducting nuclear tests in the South Pacific, a region in which everyone was decidedly opposed to such testing.

42. He drew attention to the appeal to the parliaments and public of all countries of the world made by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR in its press release No. 137, dated 10 October 1990, which the peoples of the South Pacific endorsed. According to that release, nuclear tests had become an international problem which should be dealt with by the entire international community in order to attain a general and complete prohibition of nuclear testing.

43. Mrs. GAZEAU-SECRET (France), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said she rejected the allusion to slavery and genocide made by the representative of Vanuatu.

44. Ms. BIRD (Australia), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that the representative of France had asked the countries of the South Pacific to understand the reasons which obliged France to conduct nuclear tests in that zone. Australia and the other countries of the South Pacific asked France to respect the desire, which had been forcefully stated by their peoples, that those tests should not be conducted in the region where they lived.

(Ms. Bird, Australia)

45. The Government of Australia did not accept the statement that those tests did not entail lasting environmental consequences. However, Australia opposed nuclear tests not only or mainly because of the environmental risks which such tests involved, but because of its firm opposition to any kind of nuclear testing. For that reason, Australia and the other countries of the region appealed to France to put an end to its nuclear tests.

46. Mr. VAN LIEROP (Vanuatu), speaking in exercise of the right of reply, said that he had stated that there were certain questions on which no favourable arguments could be adduced, because of the strong moral considerations involved. Those issues included slavery, genocide and, for the peoples of the South Pacific, nuclear testing.

47. The CHAIRMAN said that it was time to take a decision on draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2. The delegations of India and the Ukrainian SSR had asked to be added to the list of sponsors of that draft resolution. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to adopt the draft resolution without a vote.

48. Draft resolution A/SPC/45/L.2 was adopted by consensus.

49. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had completed its consideration of item 72. The Committee would submit its report on the item to the plenary Assembly in due course.

The meeting rose at 11.20 a.m.

UNITED NATIONS
General Assembly
FORTY-FIFTH SESSION
Official Records

SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE
5th meeting
held on
Monday, 29 October 1990
at 10 a.m.
New York

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 5th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. KARUKUBIRO-KAMUNANWIRE (Uganda)

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A/SPC/45/SR.5
2 November 1990

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 78: QUESTION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE RELEVANT ORGANS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

1. The CHAIRMAN, noting that no delegation wished to speak on agenda item 78, said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee agreed to recommend that the General Assembly should include that item in the provisional agenda of its forty-sixth session.

2. It was so decided.

AGENDA ITEM 74: UNITED NATIONS RELIEF AND WORKS AGENCY FOR PALESTINE REFUGEES IN THE NEAR EAST (A/45/13 and Add.1, A/45/74-S/21068, A/45/382, 429, 463-466, 530, 641, 645, 646; A/SPC/45/L.5)

3. Mr. GIACOMELLI (Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)), introducing the report in document A/45/13 and Add.1, said that it described yet another extremely hard year in the lives of hundreds of thousands of Palestine refugees. Drawing attention to some of the Agency's most pressing concerns, he reported that during the summer of 1990, the Agency had returned its field office in Lebanon to Beirut. That decision reflected its hope for an early return to normality in Lebanon as well as support for recent positive trends. The management and control of Agency programmes remained problematic, however, as security considerations continued to limit severely the mobility of personnel, particularly international staff.

4. In the Israeli-occupied territory, the explosive interplay of pressures, expectations and frustrations was growing. Loss of life, arrest and detention, increasing economic difficulties and social upheaval were occurring against the backdrop of what Palestinians perceived as an intolerable political stalemate. Since 30 June 1990, the end of the reporting period, several new developments had caused grave concern. The killing of an Israeli reserve soldier in September at Bureij Camp, followed by the killing of 21 Palestinians and the wounding of over a hundred by Israeli police on 8 October in Jerusalem, had assumed a special significance for the Palestinians. Those developments had led to a number of consequences besides those reported by the media. For instance, during the 30 days ending 21 October 1990, 183 curfew days had been imposed in the West Bank and 156 in Gaza. During September alone, schools had lost nearly 1,000 teaching days in the West Bank and about 1,300 days in Gaza. Those events were a stark reminder that the underlying causes of the intifadah had not been addressed.

5. The Agency continued to meet with difficulties imposed by Israeli authorities, often in violation of its privileges and immunities, in carrying out both emergency assistance and delivery of regular programmes in the occupied territory. There had been harassment, beating and detention of staff, including ambulance drivers and medical personnel, in the performance of their duties. Israeli authorities continued to restrict the access of staff to camps and agency facilities. They

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(Mr. Giacomelli)

had also continued to press UNRWA to provide information on persons treated in its health centres; UNRWA refused, however, to divulge such information to the authorities.

6. During the past year there had been many instances of intrusions into UNRWA health centres, where staff had been mistreated and official records ransacked. Procedural and legalistic obstacles were often imposed, such as newly-established complex bureaucratic procedures for construction activities, which had led to an almost total halt of urgent construction projects. The Agency was always willing to co-ordinate its activities with the authorities, as he had informed senior Israeli officials during his recent visit. UNRWA could not yield to pressure, however, and there were limits imposed by the necessity of preserving its independence and international character.

7. Turning to the Gulf crisis, he said that UNRWA had co-operated with UNDRO and other agencies by providing temporary accommodation, health teams, foodstuffs, office and logistical support in Jordan. The Agency stood ready to help, on a reimbursable basis, so as not to divert resources from the population it was mandated to assist. Indeed, Palestinians had been one of the larger groups to flee the conflict region; thus, more people were pressing the Agency for assistance and services. For example, UNRWA had managed to absorb some 3,000 additional children in its schools, but its capacity to respond to such additional requirements had already reached its limit.

8. The implications of events in the Gulf were as serious for the Palestinians as for any other community in the area. The loss of income in the occupied territory alone had been estimated at between \$120 million and \$150 million per year. It was also of concern that Palestinians seemed to be encountering difficulties with visas, study and work permits affecting their mobility and earning capacity in other countries traditionally offering them employment and educational opportunities. Although most Palestinians were uprooted refugees, they were part and parcel of the regional reality and should receive their share of resources allocated.

9. Although the Agency would be able to finance the essential elements of its regular programme for 1990, it was already facing a shortfall in funding for the Emergency Measures in Lebanon and the Occupied Territory. In order to maintain that programme till the end of the year, he had been obliged to deploy resources from the General Fund. The Agency faced the task of raising the funds to cover the regular programme, which meant at least a 5 per cent rise over the current year in order to meet the increased number of beneficiaries and higher costs, while seeking additional resources for the emergency programme. It might soon face the option of either eliminating emergency assistance or cutting its regular programme, the financing of which was by no means assured at a time of increasing needs.

10. The prevailing uncertainties in the Middle East deepened his concern about UNRWA financial prospects in the coming year. Opinion makers and political leaders were faced with options of war and reconciliation, the support of old friends or

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(Mr. Giacomelli)

the establishment of new alliances, while national and political sympathies shifted. There was a danger that short-term political inclinations would become the sole yardstick for measuring humanitarian support. If financial support fell below a minimum level of emergency assistance and regular programme delivery, it would be tantamount to abandoning the refugees, and they would certainly perceive it as such. Such action could not be condoned on humanitarian grounds and, under present circumstances, would also convey a most negative political message.

11. Mr. BERGH JOHANSEN (Norway), speaking as Rapporteur of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, and introducing the Working Group's report (A/45/645), said that in accordance with its mandate in General Assembly resolution 44/47 B, the Working Group had continued its efforts for the financing of UNRWA. To that end, the Agency's comptroller had briefed the Working Group on the current financial situation and on its needs for 1991. That briefing resulted in the concluding remarks contained in section IV of the report.

12. The Working Group was pleased to note that UNRWA expected to be able to deliver the essential parts of its regular programme for the current year. It noted with concern, however, that the construction programme was again seriously underfunded. It was particularly concerned by the difficulties in funding the emergency programme in the occupied territories, and urged Governments to respond generously to the special appeal made recently by the Commissioner-General.

13. The Working Group shared the Commissioner-General's concern about funding prospects for 1991. Expenditure under the regular programme was expected to increase by 5 per cent in order to meet the needs of an increased number of beneficiaries, mainly schoolchildren and to cover unavoidable increases in prices and staff salaries. The principal concern, however, related to the complete absence of funding for emergency-related programmes in 1991. If such programmes were discontinued, there could be serious humanitarian and political consequences.

14. In conclusion, he drew attention to the Working Group's recommendations contained in paragraph 18 of its report.

15. Mr. SALAH (Jordan) said it was regrettable that the difficult financial situation of UNRWA continued to reduce the level of its services to Palestine refugees. As of 11 September 1990, some \$US 12 million was still required in order for the Agency to continue emergency programmes at the current level until the end of 1990, while no specific commitment had been received for 1991.

16. The Agency had originally been established as an interim measure in order to address a problem that it was thought would soon be solved. That problem had, however, persisted and taken on ever more alarming proportions, and the Agency had thus been compelled to continue to perform the functions entrusted to it by the General Assembly. While the Agency's services must be commensurate with the needs of the Palestine refugees, which would naturally increase in the course of time until there was a definitive solution to the problem, they could not under any circumstances serve as a solution themselves.

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(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

17. It was Israel that was directly responsible for the creation, perpetuation and aggravation of the problem by its continued refusal to implement General Assembly resolution 194 (III) recognizing the refugees' right to return or to receive compensation. The Palestine refugee problem was a direct result of the situation created in Palestine by the international community, through the United Nations, more than 40 years earlier. The failure of the international community to induce Israel to comply with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and the other United Nations resolutions on the achievement of a peaceful, comprehensive, just and lasting settlement that would restore their rights to the Palestinians was a fundamental cause of the persistence of the problem. The international community must therefore continue to meet its moral responsibility to the Palestine refugees until such time as the problem was solved.

18. The problem of the Palestine refugees, as well as being one aspect of a complex political problem, was also a unique and painful humanitarian problem. The services provided to the refugees by UNRWA, however modest, met their basic humanitarian needs, and those services must be viewed as a humanitarian task in which all must share, with a view to mitigating the problem pending a final solution.

19. The Arab host countries were assuming burdens in behalf of the Palestine refugees residing in their territories. The services provided to Palestine refugees by Jordan were many and varied, and Palestine refugees in Jordan, of whom there were more than 929,000, the largest number in any of the Agency's fields, enjoyed the same treatment and had the same rights and duties as Jordanian citizens.

20. During the period under review, the Agency had been operating in exceptionally difficult circumstances in three of its fields, namely the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Lebanon. Because of the continuing intifadah in the occupied Palestinian territory, the services provided by the Agency there had been increasingly overburdened, and the problems encountered as a result of Israeli measures against the Agency itself had increased. Israel had continued to violate the privileges and immunities of UNRWA, and there had been clear attempts gradually to assert control over Agency operations. In the Gaza Strip, there had been some 555 intrusions into Agency premises and, in June 1990 alone, there had been 22 incursions into health centres.

21. More than 23,000 cases of injuries had been recorded by the Agency, of which nearly 18,000 cases had involved refugees, owing to continued use of violence on the part of the Israeli occupation forces. The Israeli authorities also continued to disrupt the educational process by closing schools for long periods of time, imposing curfews, intruding into schools with the use of live ammunition and tear gas, using schools for military purposes and detaining pupils and teachers. For the second successive year, the universities in the occupied Palestinian territory had remained closed throughout the reporting period.

22. From the beginning of the intifadah, it had become clear that the Agency could also provide general assistance to Palestinians in the occupied territory, both

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(Mr. Salah, Jordan)

refugees and non-refugees, in order to ensure a measure of protection, however modest, against the brutality of the occupation forces. The intervention of Agency officials had, in a number of cases, been instrumental in preventing the arrest of young people or in securing their early release, and they had been able to lower tensions, prevent maltreatment and help evacuate the wounded. While the protection of the Palestinians in the occupied territory was the responsibility of the Security Council, the initiative taken by the Agency within the limits of its powers was a humanitarian act that merited gratitude and encouragement. His delegation would like to express its esteem and admiration for the Agency staff who were providing such services in extremely difficult circumstances and hoped that they would continue to do so as long as there was a need for them.

23. Although there had been improvements in the level of the Agency's services during the reporting period, more should be done to expand and improve those services. The paucity of the Agency's resources had adversely affected its activities in the educational and health fields. In Lebanon, the Agency had had to apply strict controls on referrals to hospitals at a time when Palestine refugees there were clearly in need of expanded health care.

24. It was a matter for concern that the Agency was employing ever stricter standards in determining special hardship cases, and his delegation called upon UNRWA to resume the ration distribution to all refugees without exception. In view of economic conditions in the region in general and particularly in Jordan, where the economic crisis had been aggravated by the return of large numbers of workers from the Gulf region, including a great many Palestine refugees, the Agency should seriously consider the possibility of changing its criteria for assistance to special hardship cases and for supplementary food assistance in order to include a larger number of people.

25. While the efforts being made by the Agency to improve the situation of refugees by means of self-support programmes were much appreciated, such programmes should not be regarded as a substitute for the Agency's services. As long as the Palestine refugee problem remained unsolved, there would continue to be a pressing need for the services UNRWA provided.

26. His delegation appealed to all members of the international community to contribute generously both to the regular budget and to emergency operations. A detailed report from the Commissioner-General on the needs of the Agency would show the wide difference between the support that the Agency required and the support that it actually received. As a host country for Palestine refugees, Jordan was of the view that the Commissioner-General should present in his annual report a review, however brief, of the services provided by the host countries to Palestine refugees so that the international community might be more fully informed of them.

27. Mr. MANSOUR (Observer for Palestine) reiterated the commitment of the State of Palestine and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to co-operating fully with UNRWA.

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, Palestine)

28. The Palestinian people had been the victim of Zionist aggression, supported by imperialism, since 1948. State and individual Israeli terrorism had brought about a continuous increase in the number of Palestine refugees, which had currently reached 2.5 million.

29. Approaching its fourth year, the intifadah was gaining momentum in confronting the aggression and barbaric crimes committed by the occupying Power. Reports by many international organizations gave ample proof of the brutality employed by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people in the occupied land of the State of Palestine. Paragraphs 8 to 13 and 80 to 120 of the Commissioner-General's report (A/45/13) summarized the wide range of crimes committed by the Israeli security forces, and table 12 of that document provided shocking figures on recent civilian casualties. A total of 1,300 persons, including 300 children, had been killed, 99,150 wounded and 100,000 imprisoned or detained since the beginning of the intifadah. Those crimes and the latest massacre committed on 8 October 1990 in the Haram al-Sharif constituted acts of State terrorism and genocide committed by the occupying Power against the Palestinian people. The international community was duty-bound to compel Israel to end the occupation, and it must also help the State of Palestine to attain full sovereignty.

30. Instead of complying with the provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War or with the relevant Security Council resolutions, Israel had increased its brutal repression. As the occupying Power was threatening the safety of the Palestinian people and was attempting to annex occupied Palestine, it was essential to place the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, under United Nations supervision for a limited period. That would make for an atmosphere conducive to bringing about a just peace. The Security Council must take concrete measures in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter to force Israel to abandon its dream of a Greater Israel. The first major step in that direction would be the adoption of a resolution to dispatch a United Nations observer force to the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, in order to provide the Palestinian people with needed international protection.

31. The massive Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union and elsewhere, which Israel was using as a pretext to transfer the Palestinians out of their country, was a dangerous development. That was consistent with the Zionist myth negating the existence of the Palestinian people and their inalienable national rights, namely, the right of refugees and displaced persons to return to their homes and property; the right to self-determination; and the right to independence and statehood under the leadership of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

32. The State of Palestine had declared its readiness to participate in the peace process in the Middle East and to seek a peaceful settlement on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). The International Peace Conference on the Middle East must be convened under United Nations auspices with the participation of the

(Mr. Mansour, Observer, Palestine)

permanent members of the Security Council and all concerned parties, including, on an equal footing, the PLO on behalf of the State of Palestine. It was high time to begin preparatory work for the Conference.

33. The United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, must intensify its efforts to combat the policy of the Israeli Government, which was strongly supported by the United States Administration and which remained an obstacle to a just peace.

34. The State of Palestine reiterated its condemnation of the continued obstruction of UNRWA's work by Israel and its call for UNRWA to provide all its services in the occupied land of the State of Palestine and in Lebanon; condemned Israel for refusing to compensate UNRWA for damages to its property and facilities resulting from the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 and from the policies and practices of Israel in occupied Palestine; asked UNRWA again to continue issuing identification cards in accordance with General Assembly resolution 37/120 I; and reiterated its condemnation of Israel for not co-operating with the Secretary-General in his efforts to complete the functional feasibility study on the proposed University of Jerusalem "Al-Quds" as planned (see document A/45/530).

35. The solution to the refugee problem lay in the return of the Palestine refugees to their homes and property. Until that time, it was essential to support all efforts to place UNRWA's financial situation on a stable footing.

36. Mr. FAWZY (Egypt) said that it was the painful situation of the Palestinian people under the nightmare of occupation that had brought about the continued need for UNRWA operations despite the fact that the Agency had been established as a merely temporary expedient in 1948. The constant deterioration of the situation in the region had made the Agency increasingly necessary, and it had assumed responsibility for the welfare of new generations of refugees born in the camps and had come to perform emergency functions in addition to the routine tasks entrusted to it on its establishment. While some had hoped that the situation of the Palestinian people might improve and that Israel might respond to the calls of the international community, reality had shown that events were moving in the opposite direction and bringing increased oppression, violence and bitterness from year to year.

37. Egypt was following with great concern the arbitrary measures being taken by Israel against the Palestinian people, measures on which the report of the Commissioner-General had shed greater light. There had been human rights violations, beatings, the use of tear gas and live ammunition, the demolition of homes and the imposition of collective punishment, all of which were practices universally condemned. Israel was also interfering in the economic life of the occupied territory and bringing economic pressure to bear on its inhabitants, either through direct economic measures or through the detention of the breadwinners in Palestinian families.

(Mr. Fawzy, Egypt)

38. The gravest aspect of the Israeli practices in question was the threat that they posed to the future of the Palestinian people through interference in education. Standards had deteriorated, there had been interference on the part of the occupation authorities in determining the length of the school year, and pupils and teachers had been detained. Despite the difficult circumstances, the Agency was attempting to function as best it could, and Israel must co-operate with it and respect its legal status.

39. The sufferings of the Palestinian people would not divert it from its struggle or destroy its hopes. Through its valiant intifadah, it was fighting for the exercise of its legitimate rights, chief among them its right to exercise self-determination on its own soil. The moral of that noble struggle was that all occupation must end and that the rights of peoples could not be denied.

40. Recent events in Arab Jerusalem had revealed an urgent need for the establishment of new mechanisms to ensure the protection of the Palestinian people. Thought must be given to exploring the capacity of the various organizations operating in the occupied territory to provide information on the situation there, so that a means could be devised of providing the necessary international protection to the Palestinians and preparing an appropriate climate for peaceful negotiations between the parties directly concerned.

41. Consideration of present living conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory did not exclude thought of the future. While his delegation called upon the international community to increase its support to the Agency, it looked forward to a future in which there would no longer be a need for its services, a future in which the Palestinian people would exercise self-determination in its own independent country.

42. Mr. SHIHABI (Saudi Arabia) recalled that UNRWA had been established in 1948 as a temporary measure so that the international community could bear some of its responsibility for the people of Palestine, deprived of part of its homeland. That situation had failed to change, and the international community was still incapable of ensuring the rights of the Palestinian people.

43. It was particularly painful to see the Palestinian people's tragedy being exploited by reckless invaders from within the Arab world itself. Such actions would only result in the destruction of the Arab world and were disastrous for the Palestinian cause. His Government was confident that the Palestinian people would see the truth, deceptive slogans notwithstanding. The crime of the Iraqi régime's invasion of the sister State of Kuwait, an Arab country that had welcomed large numbers of Palestinians, diverted attention from the Palestinians' rights. One of the first results of the invasion had been to send the Palestinians on a new exodus, the Iraqi aggression against Kuwait having robbed them of their livelihood.

44. The number of refugees registered with UNRWA had risen dramatically over the past 40 years, testimony to a great human tragedy. Meanwhile, the number of refugees continued to increase with the arrival of Eastern European immigrants. The international community must not tolerate that situation any longer.

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(Mr. Shihabi, Saudi Arabia)

45. The Israeli authorities continued to seek to exacerbate their confrontation with the Agency as part of their campaign against the Palestinian people. Such a policy only added to the suffering of the population concerned. The report of the Commissioner-General (A/45/13), although omitting details, referred to the number of persons treated by the medical services of the Agency, many of whom had been victims of arbitrary procedures and crimes committed by the authorities and armed Jews. The frightening figures contained in the report were a dangerous indication of where events were leading. His delegation wondered how the Israeli authorities could be so contemptuous of even the most basic human principles that they could kill 24 children aged less than 5 years.

46. The tone of the Commissioner-General's report (A/45/13) was very moderate out of fear of retaliation by the Israeli authorities against the Agency and its programmes. His delegation called upon the international community to take more resolute steps against such practices and to support the Agency in its great humane mission.

47. Saudi Arabia wished to express its thanks to the Secretary-General for his support of the Agency and its work and had no doubt that he would redouble his efforts to protect UNRWA and expose the dangers that the Israeli practices posed for security and stability in the occupied territories and for the lives of the population there.

48. Mr. TALAT (Iraq), speaking on a point of order, said that the representative of Saudi Arabia must speak only on the agenda item under consideration and not on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

49. Mr. GUVEN (Turkey) said that the item under consideration could not be dissociated from the political context in which UNRWA had carried on its activities for more than four decades. The question of Palestine was the central issue from which the problems facing UNRWA had arisen, and those problems would continue until all of the occupied Arab territories were returned to their rightful owners. UNRWA was not in itself a solution to the problems caused by the situation in the Middle East. It was only an instrument created by the international community to fulfil its collective responsibility to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestine refugees pending a political settlement of the problem. However, that responsibility was not diminished by the Agency's inability to eliminate the root causes of the situation.

50. The Commissioner-General's report (A/45/13) indicated that harsh repressive measures and human rights violations by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories continued to challenge the Agency's ability to fulfil its mandate to assist the Palestine refugees. The difficulties with which UNRWA had to contend included the need for emergency medical assistance for more than 20,000 Palestinian victims of beatings or tear-gas inhalation, property damage, the demolition and sealing of homes, and the disruption of education as a result of frequent school closure orders. The Israeli Government should respond to the calls of the international community by recognizing its responsibilities regarding the protection of Palestine refugees.

(Mr. Guven, Turkey)

51. Equally unacceptable was the Israeli authorities' disregard of the Agency's privileges and immunities, as well as their assertion of control over UNRWA operations. Such an attitude constituted a possible threat to the safety of UNRWA staff. The return flow of increasing numbers of Palestine refugees who had been employed outside Jordan and the Syrian Arab Republic - particularly the Gulf States - was placing growing demands on the Agency's health and welfare services. That burden was compounded by the deterioration of the economic situation in the region and by the Gulf crisis.

52. As a member of the Working Group on the Financing of UNRWA, which was chaired by Turkey, he wished to comment on the financial situation of the Agency. It provided educational, health, relief and social services to over 2 million people, despite its modest budget of \$224 million. He praised the Commissioner-General and the UNRWA staff for their optimal use of such limited means, and emphasized that the Agency's task should be considered the common responsibility of all the Members of the United Nations. The contributing Governments, which included less than half of the Members of the United Nations, should strive to increase their contributions. Additional contributions in support of the Agency's emergency programmes would also be welcome. He hoped that Governments would study the Working Group's report (A/45/530) in deciding on the amount of their contributions for 1991.

53. Mr. TRAXLER (Italy), speaking on behalf of the European Community and its member States, said that until a global political settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict had been reached, UNRWA would continue to play an essential role in addressing the Palestinian problem by providing educational, health, emergency relief and basic welfare services. He commended the Commissioner-General for his efforts and for his impartial report (A/45/13). He noted with regret that the political and economic situation in the region had not improved. In particular, the unsettled conditions in the occupied territories and in Lebanon had aggravated the economic situation and had increased the difficulty of the Agency's work. The tragic events in Jerusalem on 8 October 1990 had shown that the Israeli authorities continued to apply repressive measures and to commit violations of human rights. The statistics cited in the Commissioner-General's report on the use of the Agency's clinics by Palestinians needing emergency medical attention because of such measures demonstrated the Agency's essential role in providing health care and assistance.

54. Property damage, demolition and sealing of shelters and houses, and large-scale incarcerations were other examples of the severe measures applied by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories. Although schools in the West Bank had reopened in July 1989, strikes and selective closure orders by the Israeli authorities had severely disrupted the education process. The problem of trying to provide adequate education to 135,000 young Palestinians in the occupied territories therefore continued to be a major concern of the Agency. His delegation commended the Agency's efforts in that regard, as well as its programme to promote income-generating projects to help refugee families become self-sufficient.

(Mr. Traxler, Italy)

55. His delegation was concerned about the infringement by the Israeli authorities of the Agency's rights, privileges, immunities and capacity to discharge its functions effectively. Administrative actions that hampered the Agency's operations, such as increasing red tape and the imposition of time-consuming clearance procedures for activities that fell within the Agency's authority, were unacceptable. Violations of premises, as described in the Commissioner-General's report, must also be strongly condemned.

56. He noted with satisfaction that despite the grave problems in Lebanon, the Agency had carried out its regular functions and provided a considerable degree of emergency assistance. The safety of UNRWA staff in the face of threats, physical violence and the danger of kidnapping was a matter of concern. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Agency's resources had allowed it to continue to extend emergency assistance, as well as most of its regular programmes, to the entire Palestinian community and not solely to registered refugees.

57. The Agency's narrow funding base was especially affecting its emergency programmes. As a result of the events in the Gulf, UNRWA currently faced additional demands for assistance because of the loss of the remittances formerly sent by Palestinians working in Kuwait to their families living in the Agency's area of operation. While he fully appreciated the valuable services provided by the host Governments for the Palestine refugees, he noted that the great majority of the Agency's total budget was provided by Western countries.

58. The European Community itself was the second largest donor to UNRWA (20 per cent), while the Community, taken together with its member States, was the major donor (43 per cent). In addition, the European Community had decided to increase its yearly contribution to the educational, health and food programmes of UNRWA. That contribution, in addition to the sums provided by individual member States, amounted to approximately \$173 million for the 1990-1992 period. Moreover, the European Commission had decided to provide approximately \$1.7 million in emergency aid for the Palestinian people in 1990.

59. UNRWA remained a political and humanitarian necessity pending a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. His delegation supported the principle of convening the International Peace Conference on the Middle East under United Nations auspices. In the mean time, the European Community and its member States would continue their political and financial support of UNRWA, and encouraged other States Members of the United Nations to join them in that effort.

60. Mr. FIGUEROA (Chile) deplored the increasingly tragic situation in which 2.5 million people were adversely affected by political decisions over which they had no control. The Commissioner-General's report indicated that that situation had necessitated a major increase in the scope of UNRWA programmes to satisfy the increasing needs of the Palestine refugees. However, those new efforts had not been supported by a corresponding budgetary increase.

(Mr. Figueroa, Chile)

61. The report also cited the difficulties caused by, inter alia, the destruction and damage of UNRWA facilities due to the conflict, intentional damage to the property of the population, the imposition of curfews, and the temporary detention of individuals. The prolongation of the conflict in the occupied territories had created an unstable political and social climate that paralysed the economy and weakened the social structure. He deeply deplored the unjust detention and incarceration, without charge, of UNRWA staff in the occupied territories, in violation of Article 105, paragraph 2, of the Charter. Protecting the safety of UNRWA personnel should be a special concern of the occupation authorities.

62. The deterioration of the Agency's budgetary situation owing to decreased contributions from donor countries was disquieting, given the increasing demands on the Agency's resources. In 1990, emergency activities necessitated by increased hostilities in the region had resulted in a large deficit. It was therefore essential for donor countries to maintain their contributions at current levels or, if possible, to increase them.

63. The main programmes of UNRWA had been carried out successfully under particularly difficult conditions. In addition, the Agency had provided emergency assistance during the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories. The success of those efforts bore witness to the Agency's outstanding efficiency and commitment.

64. The fate of the Palestinian people and the stability of the nations in the region were closely linked to a just and lasting solution of the question of Palestine. That solution should be reached through the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). To those ends, he supported the convening of the International Peace Conference under United Nations auspices, with the participation of the permanent members of the Security Council and of all parties to the conflict on an equal footing.

The meeting rose at 12.45 p.m.